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8/April/85

Dear Max:

Thanks for your letter and preprints. At the moment, it seems likely I will be here on June 3. Perhaps you could call when the time is nearer.

I would certainly be receptive to a proposal for names for the other primate viruses you have mentioned. I don't see why our subcommittee couldn't vote on that as well. You might want to consider delaying an assignment of a name to the Macaque AIDS virus. I find MTLV-III strange for several reasons, not the least of which is the absence of I and II. Why not just call it "Macaque AIDS Virus" for the moment?

As for the Haseltine proposal, I would suggest that you solicit it for our deliberation if you think it is worthwhile. I'd have to say that a priori the idea of using a mechanistic device as a basis of nomenclature is less than appealing. Just consider what the extensions of that policy would do!

Best regards,

Harold E. Varmus, M.D.  
American Cancer Society  
Professor of Molecular Virology